

53 TWO BANQUETS CELEBRATING THE FAMOUS CHARGE
Transcribed by Dr. Douglas J. Austin 53 [TWC 35(1) p4 2017]

(*) These transcriptions follow my 2004 publication of CWRS SP 32, which detailed the “*Daily Telegraph*” accounts of the origin and progress of the celebrations.

"THE DAILY NEWS" ; TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1875

THE BANQUET TO THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

The banquet was fixed to take place at half-past four o'clock yesterday, but three hours earlier the Alexandra Palace, where the festival was held, began to be filled by a crowd that rapidly increased till there was hardly any room to move in the spacious courts. There was plenty to be done before the banquet began. In the Great Central Hall were arranged a series of trophies from the Crimea, including swords and guns, tom jackets, bullet-riddled caps, Russian helmets, and at least two drums, the spoils of the 77th at the battle of the Alma. The Countess of Cardigan lent for exhibition the head of the charger which carried Lord Cardigan down the valley. But of this class of specimen the palm was carried off by an Arab charger belonging to Colonel Kent, which served through the Crimean campaign, and afterwards went to India. The experiences of this horse appear to have been wide, warlike, and remarkable; but probably it would, if the choice were proffered, have fought the Alma over again, or at least have repeated its journey "to the mouth of the Kyber Pass." rather than spend another such afternoon as yesterday. One form of public curiosity persistently assumed was to examine the teeth of the poor animal, with a view to testing the assertion that 21 years ago it was already distinguished. Towards what may be regarded in the light of a gift horse this procedure was indefensible. But when continued with brief intervals throughout a long afternoon, it became positively insupportable, and was finally resented by the patient beast in a manner that brought the experiments to a summary conclusion. In addition to the exhibition of these relics of the war, there was a special performance in the theatre, the proceeds of which were to be handed over to the Committee having the management of the celebration. Mr. G. Conquest, Mr. Terry, the Globe Theatre company, and Mr. J. Clarke generously gave their service, which were highly appreciated by a densely crowded audience. Perhaps the great feature of the afternoon's entertainment was the recitation by Mrs. Stirling of Mr. Tennyson's trumpeted verses on "*The Charge of the Light Brigade*". They were splendidly recited, and were received with prolonged cheering.

At four o'clock the heroes of the day began to assemble at the foot of the stairs which led to the banqueting hall. By far the lesser proportion of them were in uniform, though here and there among the throng showed the uniforms of the 4th Regiment of Dragoons, the three regiments of Hussars, and the 17th Lancers. The majority of the men were in mufti, only the medals on their breasts showing that they had been soldiers. There was a good deal of handshaking to be done before they could get through the crowd at foot of the staircase; but once clear, their way was prepared to the appointed seats around the brilliantly-lighted dinner table. By a happy thought the guests were massed by regiments, so that old comrades had the opportunity of sitting together. The 4th Dragoons were called to lead the attack on the tables, the 4th and 13th Light Dragoons bringing up the rear, which, one remarked, was precisely the reverse of the order in which they charged the Russian guns. Shortly before half-past four, the Baron Mandant de Grancey, military attaché to the French Embassy, arrived, and his uniform of the Chasseurs d'Afrique being recognised, a strong disposition was manifested to carry him up stairs shoulder high. The Baron politely but firmly declined the proffered honour and shaking hands all round as far as he could reach, lightly skipped up stairs amid a loud cheer. The dinner was presided over by Colonel White, who had on his right and left the Baron de Grancey, Commandant Canovaro, Naval Attaché to the Italian Royal Legation, Colonel Trevelyan, Lord Tredegar, Sir George Wombwell, Captain Johnson, Captain Malone, officers of the Light Brigade, and Mr. N. A. Wood, who had been invited to represent the

special correspondents of the Press who went through the campaign. The splendid dining hall was tastefully and appropriately decorated, the walls being festooned with wreaths of laurel, here and there glittering stars, formed of bayonets, with death's heads in their middles, the motto being completed by the word "or glory". The dinner was served à la Russe, but was none the less relished by the gallant survivors of the Balaklava charge, who accepted the varied and successive courses without question, "theirs not to wonder why" what appeared upon the bill of fare as an entrée should upon inspection turn out to be a roast chicken, or why roast beef or a middle of mutton should present themselves disguised under the name of relevés. At some of the tables there was a disposition shown to prefer a good honest quart bottle of beer or porter to champagne. But this weakness was not general, the men, as a brigade, standing up boldly to the bottles, whether of sherry or champagne. The entremets (plain pudding and the like) being reached, the men had time to look around them, and sudden recognitions of old, familiar faces began to rattle around like musket shot. Space was no object, and "Seth" being recognised at the far end by "Charley," who sat just under the wing of the chairman, he was cheerily hailed and boisterously responded. They took their dinner in skirmishing order as it were. Strategic movements were going on all over the room, "George" coming over to see "Dick, old fellow," "Dick" making a dart in the direction of the newly sighted "Bill" and "Bob," who belonged to quite another table, being discovered with his arm around "Tom," next to whom he insisted on sitting albeit there was no chair. One gentleman in a grey suit, who answered to a general cry of "Johnnie," gratified a set of comrades to whom he paid a flying visit, by going through a few steps of a dance, much to the discomfiture of the waiters, who were changing the plates, and had not too much room to pass. Colonel White, who had been unexpectedly called upon to preside, made a capital chairman, prompt and equal to any emergency. Perceiving that the proceedings were beginning to lapse into a promiscuous interchange of visits, he ordered grace to be said. This had the effect of concentrating attention on the platters, and the choir having beautifully sung thanks for the dinner, the men set steadily to work, and finished the meal. There were about 130 survivors of the famous ride present, and their names are worthy of record.

These are they:

Edward R. Woodham, John Hickey, J. B. Forbes, Dennis Heron, Edden John, Palin John, William Pitt, Frederick Short, James Whitby, Daniel Deering, Thomas Ryan, John Boxall, James Batton, Henry Keagan, Robert Ferguson, William Thome, Walter Best, William Butler, Peter Carroll, Thomas King, John Ford, George Baun, R. Owen Glendwr, G. Lay Smith, Wm. Williamson, John Brease, John Buckton, Richard Young, John Lawson, William Perkin, Isaac Hanson, John Ettridge, R. Evans, James Pamplin, John Brooks, Charles Warren, Joseph Gumage, Henry Taylor, William Grey, P. H. Marsh, Charles Aldous, Thomas Dyer, William Butler, James Mustard, Sergeant Kennedy, William Travers, Thomas Mullins, Robert Harris, James Scarfe, Tiggell James, Sweeney, G. D. Price, J. G. Baker, Fred. Armes, John Howes, John Holloway, James Devlin, Charles Macauley, Thomas Tremley, Robert Nichol, John Hogan, John McCausland, James Hefferon, Robert Johnson, James Dewan, William Grey, David Andrews, Isaac Middleton, Matthew Holland, Henry Jewell, William Smith, Richard Davies, Richard Brown, William Bentley, John Proctor, John Glannister, Henry Parker, W. L. Rhys, Anthony Wilder, Robert Martin, James Gusterson, Seth Bond, James Fletcher, Charles Powell, David Grantham, Thomas Williams, Charles Cork, James Hodges, Thomas Alliston, N. W. Easton, Benjamin Beeston, William Watlin, Edward Martin, A. Mitchell, James Lamb, James Lincoln, Thomas Cooke, W. D. Colson, James Malanfy, James Cameron, Job Allwood, Henry Brown, J. H. Harding, John Allen, George Gamham, Frederick Peake, Joseph Rhodes, Edwin Leoney, J. D. Robinson, Joseph Reintly, John Baker, Thomas Marshall, Frances Dickenson, David Stanley, Thomas Allen, Charles Morgan, John Brown, Thomas Clarke, William Purvis, Thomas Morley, James Bloomfield, William Barker, George Herriott, James Nunnerly, Robert Williams, John Penn, and M. E. Lanfred.

The white-gloved toastmaster proving scarcely equal to obtaining silence for the chairman, the services of a trumpeter were brought into requisition, and at a single blast the company sat stiffly at

attention. Colonel White began by apologising for what he was pleased to call his inefficiency as a chairman, and was met by a loud shout of "No, no." This changed to a ringing cheer when he modestly added, that perhaps, after all, might have some claim to his position, "having had the honour of leading the squadron of direction alongside our lamented commander now dead," "The Queen" was toasted upstanding, whilst the band played the National Anthem. "The Health of the "Prince of Wales" was drunk with even more enthusiasm, some gallant fellow at the end of the room shocking the toastmaster - who on the whole had rather a bad time of it - by insisting on having coupled with the toast the name of "Alexander". The "British Flag" was the next toast, the gallant chairman managing to say something new on a hackneyed topic, declaring amid loud cheers that "wherever that flag floats blessings seem to grow beneath it like flowers." Sir Edward Lee, Chairman of the Directors of the Alexandra Palace, proposed what was the toast of the evening; "The Survivors of the Six Hundred." Perhaps, according to stricter etiquette, the greater portion of the audience ought to have remained silent whilst in eloquent language Sir Edward spoke their praises. But in plain truth they did otherwise, cheering madly, and accepting the compliments with clapping of hands. One grey-haired Hussar seemed to feel the delicacy of the position, and amid the roar of the cheers his reproving voice could be heard crying "Silence, please!" But the cheers continued and so did the dragoon and Sir Edward Lee, the whole being a cheerful original performance, which added the last strain to the outraged feelings under which the disregarded and white-gloved toastmaster had gradually been sinking. Sir Edward Lee, likening the Brigade to a company of Prince Ruperts, said he could imagine them saying with the Prince, as they rushed forward with the light of battle in their faces,

By Heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon.

Whereupon a Light Dragoon, whose breast was covered with medals, jumped up and called out, "I could do it again tomorrow." "Silence, please!" responded the voice of the imperturbable Hussar, and Sir Edward Lee found another opening for the continuance of his speech. When Sir Edward had made an end of his speech and had sat down, then happened was the most striking incident in a gathering full of vigorous life and unsophisticated manner. The Trumpeter who stood behind the chairman suddenly sounded the charge. Up leaped the Light Brigade as one man, and with a wild cheer and the waving of sabre-less sword-arms looked for a moment as if they really were going "to do it again." But there was no enemy in sight, and after going through some vigorous passes with imperceptible swords, they slowly and sorrowfully resumed their seats. Mrs. Stirling brought the enthusiasm back to its old pitch by her recitation of a spirited poem entitled "*Balaklava*"-

We were but six hundred; how many the foe
We knew not, we cared not, we asked not to know.

That this was historically correct the survivors of the Six Hundred affirmed by a thunderous shout, and Mrs. Stirling retired amid tremendous cheering. Lord Tredegar, standing up to respond to the toast, his brother officers near him stood, and some of the men followed their example. "Sit down, gentlemen," said the toastmaster, reappearing. "Nonsense," cried the chairman; "Stand up comrades. We have listened to an eloquent speech from Sir Edward Lee doing homage to the Light Brigade. Let all the survivors stand up in response." So all stood up while Lord Tredegar, Sir George Wombwell, and Colonel Trevelyan, in brief and soldierly speeches, replied on behalf of the Brigade.

"The Memory of the Dead" was next proposed by the chairman, and drunk amid profound silence. "Comrades," he said, "Let us think of those we left behind, who did not come home again." "Perhaps they've gone to a better home," one of the men said gravely; and then all was hushed while the band played the "Dead March" in Saul, and tears ran down many cheeks.

A toast to "Our Gallant Allies," introduced by the Chairman with the home question, "Where would many of us be now if it were not for the Chasseurs d'Afrique?" was received with repeated rounds of cheering, the company standing up and waving their hands. Baron de Grancey, who spoke in English, and Commandant Canovaro, who spoke in French, responded, the former at some length, and concluding, to the absolute and irretrievable despair of the toastmaster, proposing the altogether unexpected and totally unprovided for toast of "The Duchess of Edinburgh." However, the Light Brigade were equal to this also, and, the Baron leading the cheers, they lustily hurrahed for the daughter of the Czar. After this, the proceedings, as a whole, began to collapse, fragmentarily breaking out in fresh places all over the room. It was generally understood that the toast to "Our Hosts" was duly proposed and responded to, but it is more certain that neither Captain Nolan nor Lord Cardigan was forgotten by their comrades who came out of the fire, their names rising up above the din of conversation, and being hailed by loud cheers. Shortly after seven o'clock the Chairman left the chair; and so came to an end a historic meeting which, whilst marked by much heartiness and a refreshing disregard of the conventionalities of dining out, at no time lapsed into anything approaching disorder. To the Directors of the Alexandra Palace, who were responsible for the arrangements, and to Messrs. Bertram and Roberts, who provided the liberal dinner, the highest credit is due.

The chair was occupied by Colonel White, of the 17th Lancers. On his right were seated Baron de Grancey, of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, military attaché of the French Embassy; Commandant Canovaro, Naval Attaché of the Italian Legation; Sir George Wombwell, Bart., Sir E. Lee, and the directors of the Alexandra Palace. On the left sat Lord Tredegar, better known in the service as Sir Godfrey Morgan, and Lieutenant-Colonel Galt, and included among the other visitors invited were - General Sir Thomas McMahon, Colonel Trevelyan, Colonel Pell, Colonel Kent, Major Montague, Major E. Lennox Jervois, Mr. J. Malone; Mr. J. Wooden, 104th Regiment; Mr. J. Kelly, 8th Hussars; Mr. J. Berryman, Rev. R. Halpin, Sir Frederick Perkins, M.P., Mr. J. Pennington, Mr. N. A. Woods, and Mr. E. R. Woodham. The general company, numbering upwards of 200 in all, included almost 160 men duly accredited as having been actually engaged in the memorable charge of the Light Brigade. The dinner, supplied by Messrs. Bertram and Roberts, was of a high class character. On the first toast being called by Mr. Wilson, the toastmaster, the CHAIRMAN rose and said:- Comrades, I am sorry for your sakes that I occupy this place. When I came here this evening, I had no idea that I should have to do so; but in the absence of names that are now historic - Lord Lucan, Lord George Paget, and others - I was asked to take this position, though I feel unworthy of it. ("No, no," and cheers.) I must say that I had really a feeling of some pride when I came to look back twenty years ago, and thought that as a young man I had the honour of leading a squadron of division alongside of our gallant chief who is now dead and gone and perhaps on this account I am not altogether unworthy of being before you. (Cheers.) I now rise to propose the toast of the day among soldiers, a toast which is dear to us all. It seems to me that no men in England have given greater proof of their loyalty to the Queen than ourselves. I drink therefore to the health of the Queen, and I feel that I need say no more, because more words would spoil the sentiment. (Cheers.) The toast was drunk with great cheering, and was followed by the national anthem, sung by an efficient choir, with Miss Ellen Home, Miss Emily Mott, Mr. Wilford Morgan, and Mr. William Dalton, soloists, and Mr. F. Archer, accompanist.

The CHAIRMAN - Comrades, I now rise to propose the second toast, one which will be drunk I am sure with as much loyalty and heartiness as the last. The Prince of Wales has gone to India. Let us drink not only to his health, but to his happy return. (Cheers.) Many of those happy fellows I see around me have been in that country, and have shed their blood there, and to them, and to all here, I need not do more than propose the health of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Colonel of the 10th Hussars, and may God speed him on his journey and send him safe home again. (Much cheering, and calls for cheers for the Princess of Wales.) Mrs. Stirling, who had declined the invitation to dinner, entered the room and took a seat near Sir Edward Lee.

The CHAIRMAN, rising, amid some slight commotion, said - Comrades, I have now to propose the third toast - (A Voice - "Order, please") - "The British Flag!". I know not what to say about it. One could say so much that perhaps the best thing would be to say nothing at all. That glorious flag for years - for a thousand years, has braved the battle and the breeze, and I see many gallant fellows who have fought under it. This flag has gone everywhere, and, by some extraordinary fatality, wherever it floats, blessings seem to grow under it like flowers. We will drink to the British Flag with all honours. (Loud cheers.)

Sir EDWARD LEE, being called upon to propose the next toast, said - Colonel White and Gentlemen, - I hope I shall be exonerated from any charges of possessing more than my share of national vanity when I bring before your notice the toast of the day. One may safely say that this is no common anniversary we celebrate tonight, and that these are no ordinary guests we have bidden to our board. On this day one-and-twenty years ago was achieved a chivalrous exploit - I use the word chivalrous advisedly, for in what does the truest chivalry consist but in a high conception of the little word - little, but pregnant with meaning - duty? That deed of arms, I maintain, was "above all Greek, above all Roman fame." Beside the actors in it, so many of whom are present here this evening, one can see the shadowy figures of your mythical heroes almost become substantial, and one can realise that there may have been some truth after all in the story of Horatius defending the bridge, a single breast against a phalanx of enemies; of Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans repelling the foe at Thermopylae, though the arrows from his ranks were thick enough to darken the air. The material results of the Balaklava charge may have been small, but its moral effect was magnificent. (Cheers.) The blood that was shed in that brief mad ride in the North Valley was not shed in vain. There may have been a blunder, but I hold with the Laureate, when he wrote to Mr. Woodham, secretary of this committee, that England should be thankful for it, proving, as it did, that her soldiers are "the most honest and most obedient under the sun;" true to their flag, true to discipline, and true to the comrades that that gallop knee to knee with them into the gaping mouth of destruction. (Cheers.) A blunder it may have been, I repeat, but a blunder rich in the noblest traits of soldiership, in valour impetuous, in fortitude uncomplaining, in devotedness sublime. A blunder it may have been, but it one which shall shine luminous for ever on the golden roll of our military history - (hear, hear) - a blunder, if it was one, which shall set the pulses of our island race tingling with pride, and their hearts throbbing with emulation, while a shred of the Union Jack remains to be nailed to a British mast-head, or be carried in the midst of a British regiment to victory. (Cheers.) There was no need on the 25th of October, 1854, when the trumpets sounded the charge, for officers to appeal to their men for support; they felt too much confidence in the mettle of those behind them. (Hear, hear.) There was no need for men - when with teeth clenched and knees well pressed into their saddles, they leant forward for that glorious charge, to look to their officers for encouragement, for they knew that the bluest blood of England was in the front - (loud and protracted cheering) - and they knew that these with themselves would be "in at the death." If I desired to cite individual acts of heroism, I could recall enough among those which have been related to me of the guests now sitting at this table to make an "Iliad" of our own. There were men there who rode into action though their sword-arms were disabled. There were men who, though wounded themselves, contrived, in all the heat of that desperate retreat, to aid in saving comrades who were more seriously injured than themselves. (Cheers.) There were men who stood by their prostrate officers, and made their bodies a defending shield - a target for the enemy in the face of appalling odds. (Cheers.) I was reading the other day in a volume by one of our highest military authorities his ideas of what a cavalry officer should be, and he declared that the leader of a body of British horsemen should be the Prince Rupert of the army, and should covet true honour like a sinner. In going over the episodes of that memorable Ride of the Six Hundred, I could not help saying to myself that not merely the gallant Cardigan himself, but the humblest troopers under his command on that day, were all Prince Ruperts, and might be imagined saying, as they rushed forward, with the light of battle on their faces: By Heaven, methinks it were an easy leap To pluck

bright honour from the pale-faced moon. (Cheers.) I am reminded by an inscription I see on the walls that this is also the anniversary of another fight - a fight in which our legions were arrayed against a Power which was our cordial ally in the Crimea, and a distinguished military representative of which I am so glad to see present at this table. (Much cheering.) There were four hundred and thirty-nine years of interval between Agincourt and Balaklava; but time wrought no change in the breed, and those who were in the last battle as in the first, might, in Shakespeare's language, "Stand a-tip-toe when this day is named," and "remember with advantage what deeds they did." For us who have the privilege to greet them, I may paraphrase the address of Henry V, to the English host, and say that their names are "familiar in our mouths as household words" - that we should yearly on the vigil feast our friends, and that their fame should in flowing cups be freshly remembered. With this object have the directors of the Alexandra Palace sent their invitation to the remnant of the Light Brigade to repay in some small way the debt of gratitude due to you by your countrymen, and to prove that there is still appreciation in this our land for the courage which knows not when it is beaten, and the endurance which has made the Empire what it is, and carried our victorious flag to the uttermost ends of the earth. (Cheers.) I shall now hope that as this commemorative banquet has taken place for the first time under roof of the Alexandra Palace, it will eventually become an annual institution. (Loud cheers.) I hope we shall see you here year after year, and so far as I am personally concerned I trust that so long as there is a man of the Light Brigade alive, even if he has not a comrade left to shake hands with him, that he will wend his solitary way to Muswell-hill to receive the congratulations of his country - (cheers and a laugh) - to receive from his fellow countrymen that tribute of admiration which the Empire is always ready to bestow upon those of her sons who have served her nobly and well. (Hear, hear.) I shall ask, in conclusion, those at this board who were not in the charge to drink to the health of those who were, and to honour those who now honour us with their presence - those whom we respect, revere, and love - those whose names only to mention sets the heart leaping as at the sound of a trumpet - "The Survivors of the Six Hundred." (Cheers.) With this toast were connected the names of Lord Tredegar, Sir George Wombwell, Colonel Trevelyan, and Colonel Messinger.

The trumpeters of the 8th Royal Irish Hussars (one of the regiments engaged in the charge) sounded in succession, and with great effect, the cavalry calls "Walk-trot-galop." The band of the same regiment played "Garryowen." Before these gentlemen were called upon to respond, Mrs. Stirling was introduced to give a recitation. By way of preface the highly gifted lady said - Gentlemen - I am an actress, as, perhaps, some of you may know, and am much more used to speak in public the words of others than my own, but I feel I should like, in my poor way, to say how proud I feel to find myself in the presence of so many brave men. (Cheers.) Courage and bravery are qualities especially dear to us poor cowardly women, and I feel my heart burn at this moment, when I think of the impression that your extraordinary bravery must have made on your foes. I know at home it filled us with admiration, with pity, and with wonder - wonder which has endured for twenty-one years - at a feat which will be esteemed as one of the brightest and most gallant deeds in the annals of English history. (Cheers.) You know, gentlemen, what one of our distinguished allies said of this memorable charge. He said, "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre." I may now give you a few words better than my own. Mrs. Stirling then recited with great spirit an ode on "*Balaklava*," by Mr. Richard Chandler.

The scribbler in safety may fairly enlarge
On the blunders we made in that terrible charge;
But the bursts of our steeds, and the strokes of our steel,
Caused the columns to waver, the squadrons to reel:
We were but six hundred; how many the foe,
We knew not, we cared not, we asked not to know,
Midst the flashing of cannon, the musketry's roll,
We heard but our orders, we saw but one goal:
The fire-fringed mountains we shook with our tread,

Front and flank were our foemen, behind us our dead:
Midst a whirlwind of carnage the guns we rode through,
For slaughter too many, for conquest too few.
The breathless, but fearless, a passage we tore
Through a death-dealing host where our dead lay before.
It might not be war, the mad freak that we wrought,
To learn the result, ask the Russ what he thought,
Count the labyrinth'd legions that studded the track
Where a regiment swept forth, and a troop straggled back.

On the subsidence of the applause following this reading, The Chairman called on all the survivors to stand up while the officers responded.

Lord TREDEGAR - Colonel White, Comrades, and Gentlemen of other Regiments - it has been allotted to me to return thanks for the survivors. Our health has been drunk, and we have been treated in a most magnificent way. Our actions have been spoken of in the most flattering terms, and we have just heard a most eloquent, most charming, and touching oration spoken by Mrs. Stirling, which, I am sure, has reached the hearts of every one of us. After such an oration as that, what could one of the survivors of Balaklava have to say? The first duty of a soldier is obedience, and the next duty is modesty, and I for one was never a man of many words. It is a proud position to be able to return thanks for the Six Hundred, and I am very glad in being able to meet so many of my old comrades here tonight. You must all feel that your deeds which were performed so long a time ago are not only still remembered, but are likely to be remembered for ever by our country. (Cheers.) I am sure we are all very proud to be remembered in this way, and are all glad to return our thanks to the directors here for the magnificent way in which they have entertained the survivors of the Six Hundred. (Loud cheers.)

Sir GEORGE WOMBWELL - Colonel White, ladies (several of whom had now entered the room), and comrades - After the able speech you have just heard from my gallant comrade, Lord Tredegar, I have scarcely anything more to add. It never has been the custom of a soldier to make a long speech, and I am not going to be an exception to the rule tonight. I wish very much to say how pleased I am to see you all, and especially the old 17th men whom I see here tonight, men of my old regiment. I am extremely glad to see them, and I trust they will live to see many more anniversaries of the 25th October. (Cheers.)

Colonel TREVELYAN, who was received with renewed cheering and a good deal of decidedly cordial approbation, said - Brother comrades, I have been asked to say a few words on the part of the 11th Hussars. (Calls for "Order" and silence, the majority of the company being all this time on their legs.) Words have almost been taken out of my mouth, because before me have spoken many gallant officers; but on the part of the 11th I may thank the Directors of the Alexandra Palace for enabling us to come here among the other regiments. We are met together here, and I hope we may live many a long day to resume our friendship. I am glad to see you, every one of you. (Cheers for the 11th.)

A new patriotic song and chorus "The Light Brigade," composed by Mr. Alfred Embden, of the Alexandra Palace, and set to music by Mr. H. Weist Hill, was sung by Mr. W. Dalton and the choir. Mr. Pennington, the actor, who was one of the Six Hundred, begged silence for a few moments while he endeavoured to interpret Tennyson's descriptive poem of "The Charge of the Light Brigade." It was most magnificently given, and was received with enthusiastic applause. The next toast was to "The Memory of the Dead."

The CHAIRMAN -Brother comrades, let us restrain our hilarity for one moment - (silence was at once observed) - and let us solemnise ourselves for a time and think of the brave fellows we left behind us, never to come home again. Few of us here did not leave friends, and very dear friends. The toast I have to propose is to "The Memory of the Dead." The toast was drunk in solemn silence. The band played the "Dead March. "

Miss EMILY MOTT, in a powerful voice, which filled all the vast hall, sang, with due appreciation, the song "England's Dead."

The CHAIRMAN- The toast I have now to propose will be one most acceptable to us all, that of "Our Gallant Allies. " (Cheers.) I will only just say this - Where would many of us been but for the Chasseurs d'Afrique? (Cheers.) Many of you will remember how they put to silence the guns on our left flank, and in the gallantest style prevented attack from others. May the French always be our allies. (Cheers.) I hope, and I am sure you will agree with me, that the blood we shed together on that day may have the effect of cementing the alliance between the two nations. Those who came from Italy also gave us material assistance. I give you the toast of "Our Allies " connected with the names of Baron de Grancey and Commandant Canovaro.

Baron de GRANCEY hoped he might be allowed to adopt some of the words they had heard and to address them as "comrades". (Cheers.) The greatest honour that had been conferred upon him since he became military attaché in this country, as representing the French army, was being invited to this banquet. He was glad to see there had been a protest against a book issued some time ago trying to break the confidence between the French and British armies. ("No, no" "Never".) He would not deign to answer an author who had attacked the chivalrous Marshal Canrobert. He would leave all that to the good sense of the British soldier. Lord Strathnairn, from the appointment he held in the French Army, was the best judge on that subject. Another reason why he was glad to see this meeting was that there were credulous people who believed that getting together of an army and keeping it in good order was exactly the same as getting and keeping together a number of people belonging to any trade or engaged in any commercial or industrial occupation. It was a very dangerous idea. He should like to see such people braving fever in distant countries and living on short supplies of food. He should like to see all of them sacrificing their lives as did the soldiers on board the Birkenhead in order that women and children might be saved. There were two qualities of the greatest use in military service, and those were discipline and devotion. (Cheers.) Discipline and devotion all over the world. He thanked them for the compliments paid to the allied armies, and with reference to the Russian army and to Russia he reminded them of the charming way in which this country had recently received that dear and beloved Princess, her Royal and Imperial Highness the Duchess of Edinburgh. (Cheers.) He would propose the "Health of her Royal and Imperial Highness" and would also remind them of the services performed by Miss Florence Nightingale. (Loud cheers.)

Signor Canovaro, who asked permission to speak in the French language, said that on behalf of the Italian army, their ancient comrades in the Crimea, he returned them their sincere thanks. He freely admitted, however, that the chief glory of the battle of Balaklava belonged to the English army.

Mr. WOODHAM proposed the health of the worthy host who had so kindly entertained the men from Balaklava; and he hoped that next year they might meet in the same way. (Loud Cheers.)

The only remaining toast of the list was, "The Soldiers of the Pen," to be proposed by the Chairman, and responded to by Mr. N. A. Woods, one of the Crimea "special correspondents."

After the Chairman vacated the chair several of the rank and file reached the upper end of the room, and proposed cheers for Cardigan and Nolan, and three more for "those who knew how to take care of themselves."

The company then dispersed to enjoy the various entertainments still remaining on the programme.



BANQUET OF THE OFFICERS.

Last evening many of the officers who were engaged in the Battle of Balaklava celebrated the anniversary by dining together at Willis's Rooms, King-street, St. James's, when covers were laid for forty persons. General the Earl of Lucan, G.C.B., presided, supported by Lieutenant-General Lord George Paget, K.C.B., Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Hodge, K.C.B., Major-General Sir Thomas McMahon, K.C.B., Lord Tredegar, Lord Bingham, Hon. H. H. Jolliffe, Sir George Wombwell, etc.

After the customary loyal toasts had been given by the President and cordially responded to, Lord GEORGE PAGET rose and proposed the toast of the evening - "The Health of the Chairman. " He said - I must ask you to permit me to touch on a matter which, to a certain extent, may be considered to affect myself. You are all willing, I am sure, to do honour to the part which the Light Cavalry Brigade took in the charge - the never-to-be-forgotten Charge - at Balaklava. I wish to state here the reasons that have prevented us from being present at the banquet given in their honour at the Alexandra Palace. It was a matter of fair question why the officers of the Heavy Brigade were not included in the invitation to that banquet. This is not the place, and I am not the proper person to dwell on the gallant deeds of the two brigades on that day. Suffice it to say that I could not reconcile it to my feelings to take any part in the commemoration of the gallant doings of that day, from which the Heavy Brigade were excluded. But because there was this exclusiveness it did not prevent me from sending my contribution towards the enjoyment of the gallant fellows meeting elsewhere today, although I must repeat that I did not expect that the banquet would have assumed

the character that it did; and I am not quite sure that the presence of officers on such an occasion and in such a place is quite in keeping with that which should have marked the occasion. I hope it will never be supposed that that I have not the warmest sympathy with all who took part in the action on that glorious day; and I am quite sure that no officer present who belonged to the Heavy or the Light Brigade does not share this feeling with me. I have nothing more to say than that I most cordially propose the health of your gallant chairman, and let us drink it three times three. These cheers were enthusiastically given.

General Lord LUCAN, in responding to the toast, said - I cordially thank you, Lord George Paget, for the very kind manner in which you have proposed my health, and also for the way in which the toast has been generally received. I can assure you that it affords me the greatest pleasure to meet my comrades of something like fifty years' standing. With regard to the Alexandra Banquet, I may say that I heard nothing of it until I came to London from Ireland a few days ago. I had nothing to do with it, as far as its arrangement was concerned, but I at once observed that the object was to bring together and give honour to the Light Brigade alone, and I felt this more particularly, admiring the Light Brigade as I do, and feeling also that their achievements on the great day we are now celebrating can never be surpassed, that one branch of the service has been neglected. It is well that feats of that kind, occurring twenty-one years ago, should be commemorated today. I have no hesitation in saying that it was impossible for any body of soldiers to conduct themselves more nobly, more splendidly than did the Heavy Brigade in connection with the Charge at Balaklava. It is probable that they were not that they were not brought immediately into action as were the Light Brigade, but had it not been for the position which they took, and the bravery they displayed, the enemy would have been able to have burnt our ships, and inflicted incalculable injury. It is therefore I feel that their efforts should have been acknowledged, and I now, therefore, take the opportunity of bearing my testimony to their gallantry. Lord Lucan retired from the chair shortly after eleven o'clock, and after taking coffee the company separated.

THE TIMES" : 26TH OCTOBER, 1875

THE BALAKLAVA COMMEMORATION.

'Whether after a lapse of 21 years it was desirable to hold a public commemoration of the Balaklava Charge is a point on which there may probably be a difference of opinion, and the good taste of making the commemoration an attractive shilling day at the Alexandra Palace may perhaps be still more questionable. This, however, in all fairness must be admitted that such a form of celebrating a most striking instance of the discipline and bravery of British troops having been decided upon by those who undertook the management of the affair, nothing could have been better than the manner in which they carried it out. The survivors of the non-commissioned officers and men of the immortal Light Brigade having been invited to the Alexandra Palace to meet such of their officers as might wish to join them in the commemoration, they were treated in a way which reflects the highest credit on those to whose invitation they responded. On this occasion no difference was made between them and those who led them in the desperate charge. There were not tables on a dais for specially favoured guests, and no "seats below the salt" for the humbler heroes of the rank and file. All the invited were honoured alike, and troopers of the five regiments engaged in the charge were seated at a dinner table the elegant appointments of which might have satisfied a company of Princes.

Yesterday was the finest day we have had for a fortnight, and this it was no doubt which brought the public down to Muswell Hill in much larger numbers than had been expected. From early in the forenoon till late into the afternoon the frequent trains running to the Alexandra Palace from King's Cross were more than well filled. By one o'clock most of the Light Brigade who did attend the

commemoration were assembled in the Great Central Hall, where they witnessed the unveiling of the Balaklava Trophy. The principal object in this trophy was a colossal figure of Honour standing on a pedestal of befitting proportions, on the base of which were relics of the engagement, with the names of the officers who fell in the charge or who have died since the 25th of October, 1854. Along the Hall and extending from the trophy to the terrace was a well-arranged museum of relics, consisting of arms and of bullet-riddled and sabre-cut helmets and other portions of uniforms. There were also in the collection articles found in the baggage of Prince Menschikoff, and which were abandoned by him on the field of battle, and the head of the charger which carried the Earl of Cardigan while leading the charge. But a more remarkable object was a beautiful living charger, a high caste chestnut Arab, the oldest charger which has survived the Crimean War, if not the oldest one in the British Service. This noble little animal is the property of Colonel Kent, of the 77th Regiment, who kindly lent him for the occasion. Having served in the Crimea, the horse went round the Cape to Australia, and did duty throughout the Indian Mutiny. He has been twice in India for 12 years in all, and is now with Colonel Kent's Regiment at Woolwich. As, in excellent condition, he stood bridled and saddled at the Alexandra Palace yesterday, he looked quite young and quite fit for another campaign in any part of the world. Colonel Kent also lent the Russian drums captured by the 77th at the Battle of the Alma. During the unveiling of the trophy the band of the Alexandra Palace Company performed an appropriate selection. From 2 o'clock up till half-past 4 there were a variety of theatrical performances, in which Mr. G. Conquest, Mr. Terry, Mr. Hermann Vezin, Miss Julia Gayford, Miss Lucy Franklein, Mr. F. H. Celli, Mr. J. Clarke, and other popular members of the theatrical profession took part. The great attraction in the theatre was, however, the recitation by Mrs. Sterling of Mr. Tennyson's ode, "The Charge of the Light Brigade". The enjoyment of those who took part in the commemoration was throughout much enhanced by the admirable programme published for the occasion. It contained much appropriate information, commencing with the account of the Battle of Balaklava and the charge of the Light Brigade, written from the camp before Sebastopol by Dr. Russell, as War Correspondent of The Times.

The event of the day was, of course, the dinner which was held in the principal saloon of the Palace - a fine apartment some 200ft in length. One half of this was fitted up as a reception-room, and the other half as a banqueting chamber. The latter was very handsomely decorated. Behind the chairman's seat was a trophy, having the Russian flag as a centrepiece, encircled by the English, French, Italian, and Turkish flags. Effigies in armour kept guard on either side of this trophy, and along the side walls were military emblems and mottoes. The tables were rich in adornments of plate and choice fruit and flowers. Covers were laid for about 250, and the guests of each of the five regiments which furnished contingents to the Light Brigade - the 4th Light Dragoon Guards, the 8th Hussars, the 11th Hussars, the 13th Light Dragoons, and the 17th Lancers - were ranged so that the survivors of each contingent should be together. The 8th Hussars is the only one of those regiments now in England; and its band was in attendance and played throughout the dinner. The officers of the Light Brigade still surviving did not respond in any considerable number to the invitation to attend at the Alexandra Palace. As a body, they celebrated the anniversary privately at Willis's Rooms, as is their custom; but among those who did join in "the commemoration" were Colonel Trevelyan, 11th Hussars; Colonel White, 17th Lancers; Major Sir George Wombwell, 17th Lancers; and Lord Tredegar, 17th Lancers. Colonel Kent, 77th Regiment; Lieutenant-Colonel Galt, Major C. Lennox Jervis, Captain Clutterbuck, and other officers also attended. About 120 of the rank and file of the Light Brigade sat down to dinner. With but few exceptions they were in plain clothes, but wore their war medals, and it was gratifying to see that to a man they were dressed respectably and seemed to be occupying comfortable positions. Their hearty greeting of one another was in itself a sight to see. Some of them who had been companions in the same regiment had never met since they left the Army till brought together on this occasion. In the menu and serving of the dinner Messrs. Bertram and Roberts acquitted themselves most creditably, and the toasts were heralded with becoming effect by Mr. Wilson, the toastmaster, and a trumpeter of the 8th Hussars. Colonel White filled the chair, and great was the applause of the troopers when the

Baron de Grancey, Military Attaché to the French Embassy, in the uniform of a Chasseur d'Afrique, took his seat, on the right of the gallant colonel. On the other side of the Baron was the Commandant Canavaro, Naval Attaché to the Italian Legation.

It had been wisely provided that there should be no long speeches. Elaborate oratory would not have been nearly so entertaining to the guests as was the music sung by Miss Emily Mott, Miss Ellen Home, Mr. Wilford Morgan, and Mr. William Dalton, who were accompanied by Mr. F. Archer; and the recitations delivered by Mrs. Stirling and Mr. Pennington. But the dinner was an English one, and at a public dinner in England it is impossible to altogether ignore oratorical introductions and replies to toasts. In giving "The Queen" and "The Prince of Wales", Colonel White was brief, and the ringing and measured cheers which followed his call upon the company to drink to Her Majesty and his Royal Highness were evidence that the gallant officer was right when he said he knew that the loyal toasts need not be commended to the men who had ridden in the Balaklava Charge. To Sir E. Lee, the manager of the Alexandra Palace, was intrusted the toast of the evening, "The Survivors of the Six Hundred." He maintained that the famous charge was "a deed of arms above all Greek, above all Roman fame." There might have been a blunder, but he held with the Poet Laureate, that England should be grateful for it, proving, as it did, that her soldiers are "the most honest and obedient under the sun." This toast was drunk with immense enthusiasm to the air of "Garry Owen," played by the band of the 8th Hussars. In reply, Major Wombwell, Colonel Trevelyan, and Lord Tredegar spoke, each two or three sentences. Then, after more music, came a toast, to which everybody rose and every body drank in solemn silence, while the band of the 8th Hussars played the Dead March in Saul - it was "*The Memory of the Dead.*" Mrs. Stirling, with great effect, recited some stirring lines by Mr. Chandler, entitled "Balaklava." She reminded her hearers of the saying of a French officer who witnessed the Balaklava charge, "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre," and said that, taking this for her text, she would reply to them in poetry. The recitation elicited tremendous applause, the soldiers rising and cheering Mrs. Stirling again and again. Next came "Our Gallant Allies," which brought the Baron de Grancey to his feet. He regarded the invitation to attend the dinner as one of the greatest honours he had received in this country. He felt that he was then among "the bravest of the brave." He used the expression literally, because the men of the Light Brigade had fought against men whose prowess was described by Napoleon I. in these terms:- "When killed a Russian soldier must next be thrown down, for even when dead he faces you." An attempt had been made, from motives which he would not analyze, to break the confidence existing between the British and French armies. A book had been published in which an endeavour was made to induce credulous people to believe that this confidence should not exist, and especially that the valiant Marshal Canrobert had done his best not to come in time to the aid of the British Army. French soldiers had not deigned to discuss the question. Eye-witnesses of what occurred in the war could refute the imputation to which he had just referred. British officers knew that the regiment to which he had the honour to belong, the Chasseurs d'Afrique, did all they could to help their English comrades on the memorable day of Balaklava. Nothing but devotion and discipline could have induced 600 men to hold together as the Light Brigade did on that day in the face of such fearful odds, and against such a murderous fire. The survivors of the Light Brigade might well be proud of the achievement, because the 600 gave their own country, the allied armies, and the whole world a proof of what might be accomplished by discipline and devotion. The enemy, who had also behaved so well on the field of battle, was now so friendly an ally of this country that Russia had intrusted its beloved Princess to the care of the Duke of Edinburgh. He could not do better than conclude by asking the company to drink the health of her Royal Highness. The sentiments to which the Baron thus gave utterance were loudly cheered, and when the Commandant Canavaro returned thanks for the Italian Army in a few appropriate words, the good feeling expressed by him towards the English Army also elicited appreciative acclamations.

After one or two other toasts the company proceeded to the Great Hall, which was brilliantly illuminated, and in which there was an immense gathering. Here there was a grand military concert, in which the bands of the Grenadier Guards and the Coldstream Guards, the pipers of the 2d Battalion of the Scots Fusilier Guards, and the pipers of the 93d Highlanders took a part. The Commemoration was brought to a close by a grand display of fireworks in the grounds. It was estimated that some 20,000 persons visited the Palace in the course of the day and evening.

Those of the officers who were engaged in the combat of Balaklava celebrated the anniversary by dining together at Willis's Rooms, King-street, St. James's, when covers were laid for 40 persons. General the Earl of Lucan, G.C.B., presided, supported by Lieutenant-General Lord George Paget, K.C.B., Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Hodge, K.C.B., Major-General Sir Thomas M'Mahon, K.C.B., Major-General Clarke, C.B., Major-General Wardlaw, C.B., Colonel Portal, Colonel Hunt, Colonel Swinfen, Lord Tredegar, Lord Bingham, Hon. H. H. Jolliffe, Sir George Wombwell, Colonel Alexander Elliot, Colonel White, C.B., Colonel Mussenden, Colonel Fellowes, Colonel Grylls, Lieutenant-Colonel Sandeman, Colonel Sir William Gordon, Major C. M'Donnell, Major Elmsall, Major Clowes, Captain Goad, Major Wilkie, Major M'Creagh, Major Jervis, Major Ferguson, Major Duberly, Major Manley, Major Pendergast, Major King, Captain Gole, Captain Scott, Captain Brigstock, Captain Hunt, Surgeon-General Mouat, C.B., Assistant Commissary Sutherland, Assistant-Comptroller Murray, Mr. E. Pepys, Mr. J. Pickworth. Mr. H. Harrison, &c.

After the customary loyal toasts had been given by the president and cordially responded to, Lord GEORGE PAGET rose and proposed the toast of the evening, "The Health of the Chairman." He said:- "It is a very good custom, and one that has been generally observed, that the toasts proposed should not be accompanied by speeches. (Hear, hear.) I don't wish to break through this rule in giving to you the health of your gallant and respected chairman, Lord Lucan, and I am sure you will share with me in my best wishes that he will long continue in that good health which he now evidently enjoys (hear) and now I must ask you to permit me for once to break through the rule which has been generally observed and to touch on a matter which to a certain extent may be considered perhaps to affect myself. You are all willing, I am sure, to do honour to the part which the Light Cavalry Brigade took in the charge - the never-to-be-forgotten charge - at Balaklava, and I wish to state here the reasons that have prevented us from being present at the banquet given in their honour at the Alexandra Palace. It was a matter of fair question why the officers of the Heavy Brigade were not included in the invitation to that banquet. This is not the place, and I am not the proper person, to dwell on the gallant deeds of the two brigades on that day. Suffice it to say that the services of the two Brigades were so associated that I could not reconcile it to my feelings to take any part in the commemoration of the gallant doings of that day from which the Heavy Brigade were excluded. But because there was this exclusiveness, it did not prevent me from sending my contribution towards the enjoyment of the gallant fellows meeting elsewhere to-day. Although, I must repeat that I did not expect that the banquet would have assumed the character it did, - and I am not quite sure that the presence of officers on such an occasion and in such a place is quite in keeping with that which should have marked the occasion, - I hope it will never be supposed that I have not the warmest sympathy with all who took part in the action on that glorious day; and I am quite sure that no officer present who belonged to the Heavy or the Light Brigade does not share this feeling with me. I have nothing more to say than that I most cordially propose the health of your gallant chairman, and let us drink it with three times three. These cheers were enthusiastically given.

General Lord LUCAN, in responding to the toast, said, - I cordially thank you, Lord George Paget, for the very kind manner in which you have proposed my health, and also for the way in which the toast has been generally received. I can assure you it affords me the greatest pleasure to meet my comrades of something like 50 years' standing. With regard to the Alexandra Banquet, I may say that I heard nothing of it until I came to London from Ireland a few days since. I had nothing to do

with it as far as its arrangements were concerned, but I at once observed that the object was to bring together and give honour to the Light Brigade alone, and I felt this more particularly, admiring the Light Brigade as I do, and feeling also that their achievements on the great day we are now celebrating can never be surpassed, that one branch of the service had been neglected. It is well that feats of that kind, occurring 21 years ago, should be commemorated to-day. I have no hesitation in saying that it was impossible for any body of soldiers to conduct themselves more nobly, more splendidly, than did the Heavy Brigade, in connection with the Charge of Balaklava. It is probable that they were not brought immediately into action as were the Light Brigade, but had it not been for the position which they took and the bravery they displayed the enemy would have been able to burn our ships and inflict incalculable injury. It is, therefore I feel that their efforts should have been acknowledged, and I now, therefore, take the opportunity of bearing my testimony to their gallantry. Lord Lucan retired from the chair shortly after 11 o'clock.